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LETTER
TO THE
PRESIDENT
OF THE
UNITED STATES
RELATIVE TO THE
CHARACTER AND ANTECEDENTS
OF
JOHN E. BRYANT,
WITH A LETTER FROM
GEN. DAVIS TILLSON, LATE U. S. A.



ATLANTA, GA.:
JAS. P. HARRISON & Co., PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS.
1877.

ATLANTA, GA., April 26, 1877.

To the President of the United States :

SIR—As Southern Republicans and supporters of your administration, we feel it our duty to enlighten you as to the character and antecedents of John E. Bryant, of Maine, claiming to be Chairman of the Republican State Central Committee of Georgia.

Bryant, the most obnoxious carpet-bagger the fortunes of cruel war ever imposed upon our people, began his infamous career in this State among the freedmen in 1865, when, by order of General Davis Tillson, commanding at Augusta, he was excluded as an attorney from the Freedmen's Court, for the reason that he would foment trouble between colored people, and take pay from both sides to settle the difficulty.

He robbed the colored men of Augusta mercilessly by a newspaper scheme which he devised, and to which he obtained subscriptions for which he gave no value, as will be testified by Simeon W. Beaird, and other leading colored men.

He received from one Stephen Walton, of Augusta, fifty dollars for a specific purpose and converted it to his own use ; was prosecuted for the "larceny after trust," and escaped conviction only because of the death of Walton, as will be testified by William Gibson, Judge of the Superior Court of Richmond county.

He was elected to the Legislature as a Republican, in 1868. He bolted the caucus nominations for U. S. Senators, and caused the election of a Democrat and a quasi Republican.

He received Democratic money for opposing legislation by Congress in 1869, looking to the restoration of the colored men to their seats in the Legislature from which they

had been excluded by Democratic treachery and duplicity.

He sold out to the Democrats, and became their candidate for Speaker at the reorganization of the Legislature in 1870.

He sold his vote and influence in the Legislature to the Brunswick and Albany, and the Augusta and Hartwell Railroad Companies for money, all of which has been publicly charged in the newspapers of Georgia, and is susceptible of proof.

He has recently been reported by Ira Ayer, Jr., a Treasury agent sent by the department to investigate him, in a letter to the Secretary, under date of March 20th, 1877, to have been guilty of infamous conduct in the Custom House at Savannah.

He is a disorganizer of the most pestilential type, and has, by his trickery, depleted the Republican party in Georgia, and brought it into disgrace. He has robbed all of our friends that he could, and has attempted to drive those he could not rob, to the ranks of the enemy. Thus he has reduced the party to less than 50,000 votes in Georgia.

He is a canting hypocrite, using his pretensions of religion as a cloak to cover his nefarious schemes, and defraud into his support his unsuspecting fellow-men. He is wholly unworthy the confidence or respect of any honest man.

Your obedient servants,

JOHN L. CONLEY,

Member Rep. State Central Com.

WM. L. SHUMATE,

WALLACE RHODES,

J. A. ROBERT,

WM. H. STALLINGS,

TWIGGS V. W. RHODES,

S. S. PARDUE,

WM. HALE,

GRANDISON HARRIS,

Member Rep. State Central Com.

EPHRAIM TWEEDY,

Ex-Speaker House of Rep. *pro tem.*

From evidence which has come to my knowledge, I believe the foregoing allegations to be true. I know that J. E. Bryant, has destroyed the Republican party of the First Congressional District of Georgia. He is not entitled to the confidence or respect of Republicans.

JAMES ATKINS,
Member State Central Com.

With a residence of ten years in the State, I can fully endorse the above statements.

WM. CANTWELL,
Delegate to the two last State Conventions of the Republican party in Georgia.

Having an acquaintance of more than twelve years with this Mr. J. E. Bryant, in this State, and having been a member of the Georgia Legislature at the time he was, as a Republican, witnessing his political career, I concur in the foregoing, and hope he will not be able to deceive the President, as he has so long done us in Georgia.

JAMES M. SIMMS,
Member State Central Com.

As Clerk of the House of Representatives, in 1869, and 1870, I knew J. E. Bryant materially assisted to elect the Democratic Senator, and, from the facts and evidence, I believe all the other charges true.

JNO. J. NEWTON.

We believe the truth of the allegations contained in the foregoing.

JOHN G. CLARK,
STANLEY YOUNG,
J. R. JOHNSON,
S. C. RICE,
RODERICK D. BADGER.

Several charges, in the foregoing statement against J. E.

Bryant, we know to be true, and the others, we believe to be true.

A. N. WILSON,
Member Rep. State Committee.
SAML. SHEATS,
Member Rep. Cen. Com.
J. C. HENDRIX,

Asst. Sec. Senate 1868-69 and '70.

I concur fully, absolutely, and unqualifiedly in the foregoing statement of *facts*. I was a member of the Georgia Legislature with J. E. Bryant, and was the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

R. L. McWHORTER,
Greene County, Ga.

As Secretary of the Georgia Senate, in 1869, and 1870, I had opportunities to estimate the party fealty of John E. Bryant, who was, at the same time, a member of the lower House, from Richmond county. My own honest conviction has always been, since I observed the political course of Mr. Bryant, that the defection and present threatened dissolution of the Republican party in Georgia, is more chargeable to the bad faith he has always exhibited to the party, than to, probably, all the other reasons combined. Nothing short of a political calamity can attend Republicanism in Georgia, with such a man as Bryant in the lead.

J. G. W. MILLS.

ATLANTA, GA., May 14th, 1877.

I concur fully in the foregoing statement to His Excellency, the President. Most of it, from my own knowledge and observation. I consider J. E. Bryant utterly unreliable as a politician, and as a man.

A. L. HARRIS,
Late Member Ex. Com. Republican Party,
1st Cong. Dist. Ga.

I was a member of the Georgia Legislature in 1868-69 and '70; was one of the members who was expelled by the Democrats, on account of color; have been a member of the Republican State Committee, continuously, since July, 1867, and I fully and heartily concur in every charge made in the foregoing statement, against J. E. Bryant.

W. H. HARRISON,
Member Rep. State Committee.

I have carefully read the charges made in the foregoing against J. E. Bryant.

I know, from personal knowledge, that all the allegations are true; particularly, am I cognizant of the fact of his bribery, while a member of the Georgia Legislature.

FOSTER BLODGETT,
Ex-Chairman Republican State
Central Committee of Georgia.

Copy of a letter from Gen. Davis Tillson to Ira Ayer, Jr., Treasury Agent, filed with Mr. Ayer's report to the Secretary of the Treasury, dated March 20th, 1877, relative to the Custom House, at Savannah:

HURRICANE GRANITE COMPANY,
ROCKLAND, ME., March 12th, 1877.

Col. Ira Ayer, Ebbitt House, Washington, D. C.

DEAR COL.—Your letter received. I knew Bryant well, but not favorably, in Georgia, while I was Ass't. Com'r. Bureau F. & A. L.

My first unpleasant knowledge of him was his fomenting trouble between the freedmen, then representing both parties in the Freedman's Court, and taking pay from both parties.

Being informed of his conduct by the Judge of the Court, a man who had been appointed at Bryant's solicitation, and who gave me the evidence with great reluctance, I forbid Bryant's appearing as counsel in the court.

Thereupon, he made war upon me, in the most malicious and unscrupulous style.

Bryant was formerly from this State. He had a bitter quarrel with the Colonel of his regiment. He quarreled with General Steadman, at Augusta. General Steadman despised him heartily, would not speak to him, or allow him in his office. In fact, I have never known or heard of his holding a position of any kind, where his vindictiveness and dishonesty did not get him into trouble.

As you see, I am strongly prejudiced against him for good, personal reasons; still, I would not do him injustice. I have stated facts, leaving you to draw your own conclusions.

I am yours, respectfully,
DAVIS TILLSON.

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